

Partners in Service (PINS)

PINS brings together faith communities with human service agencies. We promote the resiliency and success of children and youth who have been the victims of abuse and neglect, ranging in age from infant to adult.

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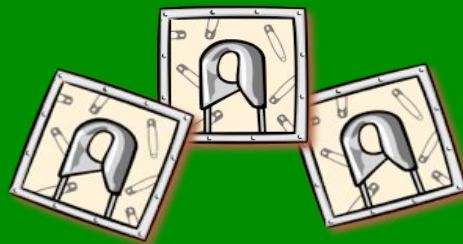
Care and feeding of your social service partner:

Your agency partner works hard, all year 'round! This might be a good time to send a card to him or her!



And chocolate is almost always welcome!

pin this up!

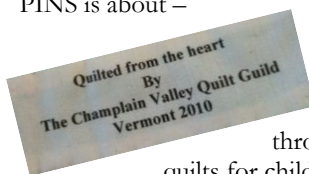


winter 2010

Dear PINS Partners:

These are tough times in Vermont. No one has gone untouched by economic difficulties.

Once in a while, a congregation has apologized, "I'm sorry; this is all we could do." And yet, generosity is still offered. No apology needed! That is what PINS is about – sharing with others what we can.



Over the holidays, children and youth received hand-made gifts such as cookies, stockings, and quilts. The Champlain Valley Quilt Guild, through Shirley Fuller, donated over two dozen lap quilts for children and youth in residential treatment. And the Kwilt Klub in Barre, through Kim Portalupi, made six quilts during a marathon

meeting one snowy December night! These quilts make many people smile – while they are being made, when they are "handed off" to me, when social workers receive them, and, of course, when children and youth receive a work of love and art that is theirs to keep.



Reminder --The PINS Coordinator position is being funded in a slightly different way in the last couple of years. The contract position requires reports about outcomes of the program – that is, what does this program actually do to help children and families being served by Family Services? Both your congregation and the State of Vermont will do well knowing what a difference PINS makes! When requested, please respond with what your partnership has been donating; feel free to keep me in the loop with your emails (PINS@ahs.state.vt.us), or drop me a note. Many thanks!

Becky Strader, State PINS Coordinator

St. Albans

No report this period.



Burlington

YOUTHBUILD in Burlington and Barre locations could use partners to help with graduation ceremonies plus opportunities to work side by side on community service that YouthBuild performs.

I love my PINS Church. **Janet Grant and all her friends at Underhill Federated Church** in Underhill are "the bomb." The creativity and energy from this congregation is outstanding. School Backpacks with supplies were provided at the beginning of the school year as well as sheets and diapers for our families. These very concrete and useful donations provide much needed support for families at crucial and stressful times. Thanksgiving and Christmas food baskets as well as gifts for two families were provided again this year. I can't put into words the feeling I have delivering to these very needy and appreciative families. I have enjoyed my five years with this church and look forward to 25 more.

Melissa L. Belrose, BSW
Investigative Social Worker

Essex United Methodist Church supported PINS families this past Christmas by buying presents for 7 children in 3 families, and 2 of the mothers of those families. From a crib mattress for a 6-month old to a bucket of cleaning products for a mom, we supplied at least 3 gifts for each person. Also we made 3 food boxes, including turkeys, and special

gift bags of fruits, cookies, and other goodies for each family, plus a \$10 gift certificate at a supermarket.

Eleanor Uckele
Mission Chair

Richmond Congregational Church bought gift cards for Lisa Johnson's caseload for holiday gifts this Christmas. Folks from our congregation bought apple pies to raise money to go towards PINS.

Leslie Johnson

Shannon Morton (SW) asked for help with two cases, one a young man 15 yrs old and the other a single mom with 4 children. At her suggestion we gave TJMaxx gift cards to each. [\$50 for the young man and \$150 for the mom].

Anthe Athas
Dormition Greek Orthodox

Lund Family Center's partnership with Charlotte Congregational Church continues to be strong. Additionally, the faith community's response to the family that needed help with a security deposit to be able to adopt a boy in foster care was just tremendous!

Thanks so much,
Kitty Bartlett
Lund Center

Many thanks to those at Charlotte Congregational Church who helped process over 5,000 pieces of mail at Lund Family Center on November 3, 4, 5, 9, and 10. These volunteers put in a total of 60+ hours to help with the LFC holiday mailing. Thanks.

A special thank you to **Wanda Audette**, Director of Adoption Services at Lund Family Center, Ashley Audette, and Josh Varney for sharing with us an inspirational "reflection on adoption" during worship on Sunday, Nov. 15. And thank you as well to the LFC staff and board for a wonderful and fantastically sticky coffee hour!! And – last but by no means least – a special thank you to Carl and the choir members for the special music.

Christmas Giving Tree: Many thanks to all of you who selected ornaments from our tree and brought in the much appreciated gifts for our partners at the Lund Family Center and our friends at the Charlotte Food Shelf.

In addition to our Giving Tree gifts for Lund, we also had volunteers who helped wrap other gifts for the Lund Center. The Lund Family Center was also a participant in the Alternative Giving Program and received contributions through this. Many thanks to all for supporting our PINS partners this Holiday Season. Church Liaison is **Ann Bielawski**.

Grace United Methodist Church helped with funds for an apartment for a new foster family.

Easter Seals is partnered with the Hinesburg Community Church. With donations from the church and from three Easter Seals employees' families we were able to provide at least 5 gifts (of various sizes, etc) to 9 of the children we serve. We were also able to provide a gift card to each of the families for groceries for the holiday meal. We appreciate the efforts of the church community and especially the coordinator, Sue Barden!

Stephanie Hardesty
Easter Seals Screener



Hartford

This year Hartford area PINS churches played a huge role in helping make the Holiday season brighter for children served through the Hartford DCF Family services office. Several area churches helped make our foster family holiday party possible, giving foster families, and staff a chance to celebrate the season and have fun spending time

together. **St. Martins Church** in Fairlee donated gifts cards so older children at our Holiday party could have the chance to buy a gift for themselves, a sibling or parent. **Greater Hartford United Church of Christ** made space available in their church, helped set up and donated a cake and cookies to decorate. **St. Anthony's** church in Hartford adopted all of our children in families that we work with through investigations, and open cases providing them each with presents. This made Christmas possible for many families and gave social workers and families a positive project to work on together.

Courtney McGuire
Resource Coordinator

We at **Greater Hartford United Church of Christ in Hartford, VT** held a Christmas party December 11th. Our members baked sugar cookies and the kids decorated them.

Kerry Ellis



St. Johnsbury

New partner **Ryegate Corner Presbyterian Church** is working with **Sara McDanolds and Susan Reed** in the St. Johnsbury District Office in their new teaming model. The Church is providing gift cards and considering other requests.



To Centre Congregational Church in Brattleboro:

Thank you for your donation of \$300.00 to the PINS Programs (Partners in Service) on behalf of the foster parents, staff and, especially, the children in custody of the Vermont Department for Children and Families. Over the years, your generosity has allowed Family Services to cover the costs to support our children that is not available from the state system. One of my favorites is the time a young man was visiting his family for the holidays and he wanted a 'real' haircut, instead of getting it done by fellow students at the residential home where he was staying. Another is the time we were able to buy ice skates for everyone in the family for an outing during the children's transition back home.

This past year we were able to pay to hold a space for child care before the state was able to pay for the full cost. One young man needed help to go on a school trip to Washington DC. We added to what he had saved as well as what the new foster parents contributed. Also, we covered the cost of yearly dues for three children for the Boys and Girls Club. And each year we are able to honor and support our foster families by putting on a dinner each May for Foster Parent Month. The staff cooked and served the full turkey dinner to our foster families. There have been as many as 125 people have attended.

This work we do is very difficult but it is God's work and we do it better because of your commitment to all children in need.

Karen LaMorder
Resource Coordinator
Brattleboro Family Services

Brattleboro

Centre Congregational Church held a PINS Sunday in November and collected baby items for our PINS partner. Becky Strader preached.

Paper mittens were hung on our Christmas tree with the name of a child that included gift suggestions. Church members took mittens and purchased gifts for children in care.

Julie Ball

Once again, the generosity of members of **First Congregational Church, Brattleboro**, has helped to bring Christmas cheer to teens served by the Department of Children and Families' Family Services Division.

Through our Partners in Service (PINS) participation, six teens who may not have received anything for Christmas each received gifts. Your donations totaling \$150 made it possible to buy \$30 gift cards to Peebles for five teens. In addition, one family in our congregation provided gifts to a sixth teen.

Moreover, a last-minute gift of four new fleece blankets from one of our members helped bring comfort for four additional youth.

Thank you for spreading Christ's love in this very tangible way!

I also want to report that my earlier request for assistance for a pregnant teenager for maternity clothing resulted in cash donations totaling \$100. This money was spent on a gift card at JC Penny's for her. I am including her letter of thanks to us. *(See next page.)*

Bobbie Haumann

The **First Congregational Church** has been making the lives of the children in custody of the State of Vermont, residing in Windham County more enjoyable, manageable, and has opened their eyes to a world in which people care about one

another. For several years Barbara Haumann has persisted to achieve acts of kindness at times of acute need. She has involved her parish in the act of giving to those less fortunate. The church has provided for children on my caseload at Christmas, with preparation for school, at Thanksgiving, and on an individual, as needed basis. It has been a pleasure to work with Ms. Haumann and the First Congregational Church. Their generosity has been much appreciated.

Tim Fleming
Social Worker

To whom it may concern,

I want to thank the members of First Congregational Church of West Brattleboro for the \$100 gift card for JC Penny's. It helped greatly with my need for maternity clothing.

*I appreciated the help greatly.
Thank you.*

D.P.

Barre



The generosity of our PINS partners and local community members is overwhelming. This year we had 19 congregations, organizations and individuals support the Holiday Drive for the needy children in central Vermont. We served 55 families for a total of 160 recipients

for the holiday season of 2009. The donations come in all sizes, shapes and forms and the families are so grateful to have the help they need to get through. For some, (I think most of us!) this time of year is a very stressful time. And for some, this holiday drive is the only way they can experience the joys of the holiday season with their children. We all know these are hard times. Just watch the news! It will confirm this every single day. Yet, the folks involved in this project give more than what is imaginable. The bags of gifts and the numbers of gift cards that I see come in and go to those in need is a phenomenal amount money, time and effort on the part of our community members. Thank you for all that you do during the holiday season and all year long!

Joan Rock
Resource Coordinator

A huge thank you to all the partners. The children were all very happy to see presents and the parents were truly grateful. I wish we had a way to share the smiles and tears with you all. Happy New Year,
Dawn

Dawn Johnson Social Worker

My PINS partnership with **Waterbury Congregational Church** is not less than awesome!!! They are a kind and generous group of folks willing to help other families and kids in need. They provided an incredible amount and kind of gifts for "my teens and families" for Christmas, which meant a lot to those receiving. In the fall, they helped to outfit the dorm room of a new college student.

Marie Tomberg
Social Worker;

I just want to thank the **First Presbyterian Church in Barre** for their generous and thoughtful Christmas contributions to our children and families. The Christmas stockings made many children very happy this Christmas. I also want to say how wonderful my PINS partners, and their

congregation, have been to both this office and to me. **Kathy Adams** (liaison) and **Carl Hilton-VanOsdall** (pastor) are a joy to work with and I so appreciate their quick and kind response to our special requests. Thank you and have a very Happy New Year!

Kim Revoir
Supervisor
Barre Family Services

Christ Church Episcopal, Montpelier, collaborated with Joan Rock in the Barre office to gather and wrap Christmas gifts from the wish lists of four children and one young mother. We announced this opportunity in church, in the bulletin, and also on our blog/website. We posted each wish list item on a small magnet with a holiday icon representing the individuals we were buying for. Interested people then selected the person and gift they wanted to purchase (and put it on their refrigerator as a reminder!). Some members, who are not able to shop, donated funds instead, which were applied to the items not selected by others. Several knitted items and quilts were also donated for distribution at the same time. This is the second year we have worked with the Barre office in this way. There has been a very positive response both years.

Rilla Murray

The **Warren United Church** had an active P.I.N.S. Holiday Project this year. Our congregation, along with the Warren Elementary School, took 5 large families in which to share our season's greetings and gifts. The Warren School, also, helped the Department of Children and Families with a special project. For the 10th year, elementary students (all faiths) held a school-wide coin drive - raising over \$400.00 - for a major P.I.N.S. shopping trip. Eleven sixth grade students shopped for, wrapped and tagged books, board games and pre-school toys to be used by children, in a department facility, waiting for parents and/or

guardians. The Warren United Church is planning a school Thank-You Event to celebrate **Warren Elementary School's** 10th anniversary as a P.I.N.S. Holiday Project Partner.

Gail Heitzker

The "goodie box" at **Waterbury Center Community Church** for **O.U.R. House** was filled and delivered four times this past year along with many cases of juice boxes. We also collected cash and gently used toys. O.U.R. House was represented on our Church wall hanging and they were given a photograph. Flowers were donated for the garden. This garden is tended by the children and staff.

Christmas stockings were filled with age and gender (ranging from 18 months to 16 years) appropriate toys and candy. (See photo.)

Virginia Martin

Becky Strader spoke at a Mission Potluck in January at the Waterbury Center Community Church. The group heard about the "big picture" of the PINS program, as well as receiving thanks for their support of OUR House. Here 's a photo of the attendees from the Ladies' Aid Society.

First Presbyterian Church of Graniteville provided several gift cards to local grocery stores to assist families of their PINS partner, the **New Leaf Child Care Center**, part of Washington County Mental Health.



Newport

We are overwhelmed with the goodness and generosity of our community churches in the "kingdom". They continue to provide us with hygiene items, back to school supplies, back packs and a variety of other essentials for our kids.

The PINS affiliates in the Newport area pulled through again this Christmas season. The **Westmore Church** "adopted" a community family and provided gifts for them. In addition they also provided some generic gift cards, phone cards and McDonald gift certificates.

The parishioners at **St. Mark's** provided us with an incredible number of gift cards (Rite Aid, Kinney Drugs, Maurice's, Olympia Sports, Hoagies, etc.), markers, crayons, and hand made mittens, hats and scarves. And, **Gardie Paquette**, came in a week or so ago with more mittens, hats and scarves. Little kids love hand made mittens!!

The **Church of God** also adopted community families and provided them with Christmas presents.

This year more families in our community were served because our number of kids in custody has declined somewhat due to the new legislation which mandates that we look at kinship possibilities before we have to become the custodians.

Deb Richards
Resource Coordinator

Westmore Congregational Church sent four bags of mainly children's clothing to Newport. The clothes were taken to the Thrift Shop on Newport. We also took up three gift cards for places to go in Newport.

Nan French

Rutland

Once again we had great success with the "jewelry table" at our annual Holiday Party for Foster Families that has been initiated and continued by the **Tinmouth Ladies Circle from the Tinmouth Community Church** (an beyond). All of the children were thrilled to have the opportunity to choose a necklace or earrings to obtain for their Birth Moms or Foster Moms or other significant people in their lives. To have someone else besides their Foster Parent or Social Worker think about them and what they might need or want and the struggles they have during the Holiday season I believe teaches a valuable lesson that the world is not all bad and that there are some really nice folks out there who will do something nice for you with absolutely no expectation of getting anything in return. Even some of the "big & bad teen boys" were impressed after they got over being weary of the motives. To then have someone offer to wrap your choices so you can have an instant gift (so to speak) was such an added benefit.

I was unfortunately unable to actively participate as I had a horrible sinus infection and left early once everyone was set and working together. So thank you for the opportunity to share this wonderful story.

Debbie Malette
Resource Coordinator



At Christmas time, we invited a group from the **Camp E-Wen-Akee** to go Christmas caroling with us - which they did - and then we came back to the church for soup and sandwiches and cookies and cocoa. Our partnership is a little different from others.....

Holly Noble
Benson Congregational

Springfield



These are all the wonderful churches that made the Holiday wonderful for many families and children!

Ascutney Union Church contributed all the wrappings and bows for our Christmas Party and Christmas Store. This great congregation has taken care of this for many years and we truly thank you!

Perkinsville Church with Fran Wright and her husband delivering, gave us many items to keep our kiddos warm this winter, with beautiful hat, scarf and glove sets. We had a huge table of donated sets so at the party every child went and picked out what they needed to keep them warm and cozy this winter. Many warm heads and hands and thank yous sent your way!

North Springfield Baptist Church donated all the proceeds from three monthly community dinners to buy gifts for the children and of course Judy Stern went above and beyond with her generous heart. There were many happy smiles with all the help from you all!

Christ's Church of Saxton's River has also worked with us for many years and made the most wonderful Christmas for our Residential Home children, once again spearheaded by **Jane Cook**. The congregation is oh so very generous and we all thank you! They so loved their full gift bags!!

Three new church's have helped us the last two years with there big hearts and generosity. They are **Christian Family Circle from Bellows Falls, with Brenda Eno** at the helm, collecting from all their wonderful congregation. The gifts were absolutely fantastic, making for happy faces and memories for many children, thank you! Second is the **First Baptist Church of Bellows Falls with Laurie Noyes** working with the congregation and delivering

the terrific presents for the children, they loved them! Thank you so much! Third but not least is the **Immanuel Episcopal Church from Bellows Falls with our friend Betty Harrison** and the congregation donating a very generous check to help make so many more happy memories, thank you!

A very sincere thank you to you all from the staff, foster families and especially the children of the Springfield Family Services District. Your beautiful hearts made Christmas for the children a memorable one.

Jane Siddall
Springfield Foster Parent
Support Worker

The **Andover Community Church** helped provide food baskets for families over the Thanksgiving Holiday. They also gave money to provide food and laundry supplies for Christmas as well as sponsoring several families for Christmas gifts. ACC also supportive two young girls to go to a winter snow camp at Bethany Birches Camp.

Savannah Gordon, Social Worker

St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Chester did not do anything over the holidays as we did not get any requests. But we are in the planning stage for the 2nd Annual Maple Fest, a complete dinner with everything made with maple syrup, to be held on Saturday, March 20, 2010, with proceeds going to PINS.

Marcia Clinton

The **United Church of Bellows Falls PINS partner is Mountainside Teen Shelter in Ludlow**. As we have done in many prior years, we collected "stocking stuffers" from the congregation appropriate for teenagers. Barbara Comtois hand-made 14 stockings which were stuffed at a special Missions Board meeting and these were delivered to Mountainside just before Christmas.

Tim Johnson

Bennington

Santa's Shop was a huge success this year. This opportunity provided kids and families to shop for their loved ones without having the stress and worry of how it will be paid for. Many thanks to **The East Arlington Federated Church, Manchester Congregational Church, St. Paul's** and many private donors! We couldn't do it without you!

Foster Family Holiday Party: Sunday, Dec 13th was a magical day for approximately 55 children at **St. Peter's Church**. A fabulous magician entertained all, yummy food topped off with a visit from Santa handing out gifts. A big thank you to our St. Peter's PINS partners for making this happen and to **Mary Gerisch** who organized the great festive party!

Valerie Miner
Resource Coordinator

North Pownal Congregational Church continues to open their hearts for children and families through the PINS Program. They have been involved in the PINS program 6 years. They have provided every child in DCF custody and additional families that DCF works with gifts for Christmas again this year. I would like to thank North Pownal Congregational liaisons, **Donna Mackenzie King & Anna Deery**, for their assistance with making this all happen. I would like to send out my heartfelt appreciation to **Pastor Rogers** and the entire congregation for supporting the PINS program and all of the children and families in our community that are served.

Athena Boulger
Social Worker



Morrisville

Indeed, the people in our congregation are always ready to support PINS. We have been a partner with the PINS Program at the Morrisville District Office for many years now and when the message goes out to the church congregation that PINS needs items or donations, there will be a positive response.

This past year our church, **Puffer United Methodist**, supported PINS by providing money for camp scholarships, school back packs filled with school supplies, Thanksgiving Food Baskets, and money for Christmas gifts.

Thanks, for letting us share!
Dot Bliss
Missions

With the help of our PINS partners we were able to obtain gifts for 63 children this holiday season, which was all of those in need in our district. Thanks to the following churches; Puffer, Stowe, Wolcott, St. Andrew's youth group in Waterbury as well as Toys for Tots this was accomplished this year at the last minute due to a cancellation of a private donor. It was very much appreciated.

Amy Anderson
Resource Coordinator

A BIG heartfelt THANK YOU to the members of the **Stowe Community Church** who came to the aid of a family of eight at Thanksgiving who needed hats, gloves and other winter accessories. SCC also played secret SANTA by providing 20 children with wonderful gifts at Christmas. One individual in the congregation, who has provided two food baskets for two special families for the last three years, did so again. Your generosity was truly appreciated. Everyone helped to make the holidays special for someone else in the community.

Diane Lee

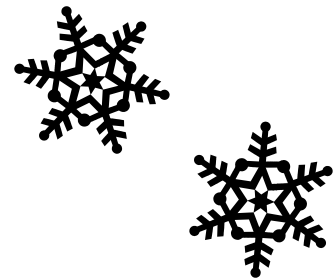
Middlebury

Our PINS partnership for the holidays sponsored 12 children. A DCF worker gave our church 12 children that needed gifts and our congregation when out and bought and wrapped gifts for them.

Kara Griswold
N. Ferrisburgh United Methodist

My PINS partnership with **North Ferrisburgh United Methodist Church** has been incredibly successful! They have provided toys and games for us to use in our Family Time space. At Christmas time, the congregation did an amazing job of "adopting" families and providing beautiful gifts for the children.

Bobbie Amerio, B.A.
Case Manager &
Screening Specialist



At Thanksgiving the **Cornwall Church** collected food for three families, including three turkeys that were donated by a Cornwall family.

The DCF office identified three families that would benefit from support for their holiday celebration. When announced in church groups of people formed teams to organize their shopping and giving. Each family was given gifts for each family member--children and adults--and enough food, including turkey or ham for dinner and pancake and syrup for breakfast, to last a couple of days. After I got the list of three families from DCF, I got a call from a local clinician working with a three-generation family unit who were also struggling within poverty. We were able to pull

together a team to meet their wishes and needs. One great help was from a local grocery owner who is given money each year to distribute food cards to folks who may need them. He gave me several and I was able to give these to families also. Everything was delivered Christmas week.

Our liason, **Ingrid Pixley**, is very involved in the community's emergency housing and we have encouraged folks in our church to be involved as volunteers at the shelter. During the Christmas break, with the college students away on break, there was an even greater need to fill the volunteer list. The homeless housing is manned by volunteers 24-hours a day for security reasons. Ingrid could give you additional information on this project, especially how community has come together to make this happen--like the building is actually owned by the **Middlebury Congregational Church** (another PINS partner).

Pat Mattison

Central Office

Twice each year, new employees participate in Foundations for Family Centered Practice. The PINS Coordinator attends and has an opportunity to present the PINS program to new Social Workers and other staff.

If you would be willing to assist in this presentation with your own experience with PINS, please email Becky at PINS@ahs.state.vt.us or call her at 802 454-8304.

A Task Group has formed to look at assisting kinship care providers gain access to information, support, and some possibly financial assistance when they are taking care of children and youth relatives. Support groups, often geared toward grandparents as parents exist throughout Vermont. If you are interested in attending a group, contact Vermont Kin as Parents, 802 338-4725, or on line at www.vermontkinasparents.org.



DCFS 10

PINS (Partners in Service)

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